

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM PHOTO/SITE PLAN SHEET

Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission

Bureau of Historic Preservation

Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026

Survey Code/Tax Parcel/Other No.: 101 / 66 00 06022 00 5 Block-Unit #011-035

County: Montgomery

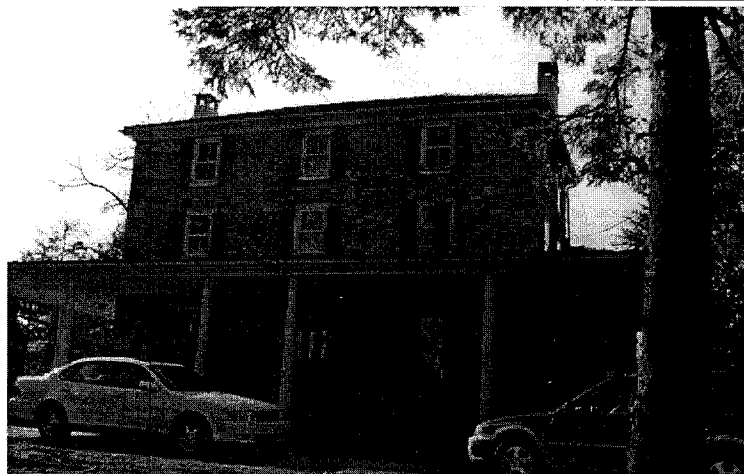
Municipality: Whitpain Township

Address: 451 School Road

Historic Name/Other Name: _____

SITE PLAN

PHOTO INFORMATION



Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
1	House – façade	
2	House – façade	
3	Barn	
4	Well	
5		
6		
Photographer Name: Robert Wise		Date: 1999

Negative Location: Robert Wise Consulting, Station Square 1, Suite 104,
37 N. Valley Road, Paoli PA 19301

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM - DATA SHEET

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation

89B

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: 101 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66.00 06022.00 5 Block Unit #011-035

County: 1. Montgomery 091 2. _____

Municipality: 1. Whitpain Township 2. _____

Address: 451 School Road Historic Name: _____

Other Name: _____

Owner Name/Address: Laurie R. Condello (Trustee) 451 School Road Blue Bell PA 19422

Owner Category: ☒ Private ☐ Public-local ☐ Public-state ☐ Public-federal

Resource Category: ☒ Building ☐ District ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object

Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: 2

USGS Quad: 1. Lansdale 2. _____

UTM A. _____ C. _____

References: B. _____ D. _____

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: _____ Subcategory: _____ Code: _____

A. Residence 1800 3,848 SF Land 1.39 Acre Dwelling _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

Particular Type: A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

Current Function Category: _____ Subcategory: _____ Code: _____

A. Single Family Residence Dwelling _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A. Federal _____

B. _____ C. _____

D. _____ Other: _____

Exterior Materials: Foundation _____ Roof _____

Walls stone _____ Walls _____

Other _____ Other _____

Structural System: 1. _____ 2. _____

Width _____ Depth _____ Stories/Height 3 _____

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: ca. 1800 Additions/Alterations Dates: ca. ca.

Basis for Dating: x Documentary Physical

Explain: Tax records

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. 2. Associated Individuals: 1. 2.

Associated Events: 1. 2. Architects/Engineers: 1. 2.

Builders: 1. 2.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: Yes x No Context(s):

Contributes to Potential District Yes No District Name/Status:

Classification: Although this is a fine property, the changes on the house (porch, roof, addition) make it a Class II resource.

THREATS

Threats: x 1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect 5. Other

Explain:

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: Robert Wise Date: 6/16/2000

Project Name: Whitpain Township Historic Resource Survey

Organization: Robert Wise Consulting/Whitpain Township Telephone: (610) 722-5818

Street and No.: Station Square 1, Suite 104, 37 North Valley Road

City, State: Paoli, Pa Zip Code: 19301

Additional Survey Documentation: n/a

Associated Survey Codes: n/a

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL RESOURCE SURVEY FORM
NARRATIVE SHEET 89C

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Bureau for Historic Preservation

Survey Code: 101 Tax Parcel/Other No.: 66 00 06022 00 5 Block-Unit #011-035
County: Montgomery 091 Municipality: Whitpain Township
Address: 451 School Road
Historic/Other Name:

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

This is a fine Federal style house, c. 1800, with a one story wrap around porch and other features, including the hipped roof, added later. The core is a 25 x 35 three story structure constructed with uncoursed stone. It has three bays and shutters around each window. There is a stucco-clad interior end chimney intersecting the hipped roof on each end; the roof has molded eaves. The porch is supported by a series of cylindrical columns and has a hipped roof. The rear addition is frame construction and has a gabled roof and weatherboard-clad walls. A large shed roof portion extends from the left side of the addition. The roof of the entire complex is wooden shingles.

Classification: Although this is a fine property, the changes on the house (porch, roof, addition) make it a Class II resource.

"Tall Oaks"

By Agnes Baker Jefferson
Photography by George S. Peck

In researching the history of old houses, the usual procedure is to start from the present and trace the ownership backward, as in this case, to the mid-1700's. However, if one has an inkling of the original owners, one can start with the earliest known residents and trace forward. But backward or forward, a snag appears and here great gaps and questions go unanswered.

With several other persons working on the Lucas house, getting nowhere, it came to this observer's attention that other approaches had to be used. After laboring over many angles for over four weeks in conjunction with other properties and families, the writer came across the statement in one of Clara Beck's writings where she called this "a house with a very involved and obscure history." Then she never went any farther nor did she elaborate on the statement.

This disclosed that the house had not been accurately traced by previous writers, i.e. Jones Detwiler, Edward Mathews, etc. For that reason, and the deadline for the Whitpain House Tour on November 14, 1976 approaching, the Lucas house was labeled in the ticket-brochure as "the house with the mystery history."

Starting with the writer's knowledge of who owned the place for the last fifty to sixty years, there was an impasse, first in the 1920-1923 period, and then another from 1900 to 1911. The 1877, 1884, and 1898 maps all labeled the farm as W. Dannehower. Yet W. Dannehower never paid taxes on land, only on occupation, horses and cows. If no property is owned by a certain name, there is no way to gain from the Recorder of Deeds Index any data relating to a particular property, hence, a researching person can go nowhere.

The next development came by accident, coincidence, or perhaps astute perception.

Other members of the committee were trying to locate the ownership of land of the DeHavens and the DeHaven family, for there were many different DeHavens appearing in all the reading material. It was the writer's good fortune to know that a neighbor, Mrs. Mildred DeHaven Slough (one of the last of the DeHaven's from the Gulph Mills area) had access to some DeHaven genealogy. She procured the record from a friend of a friend of a relative, and graciously turned over a whole packet of information on the "DeHavens in Whitpain" compiled in 1938.

In this packet were the following:

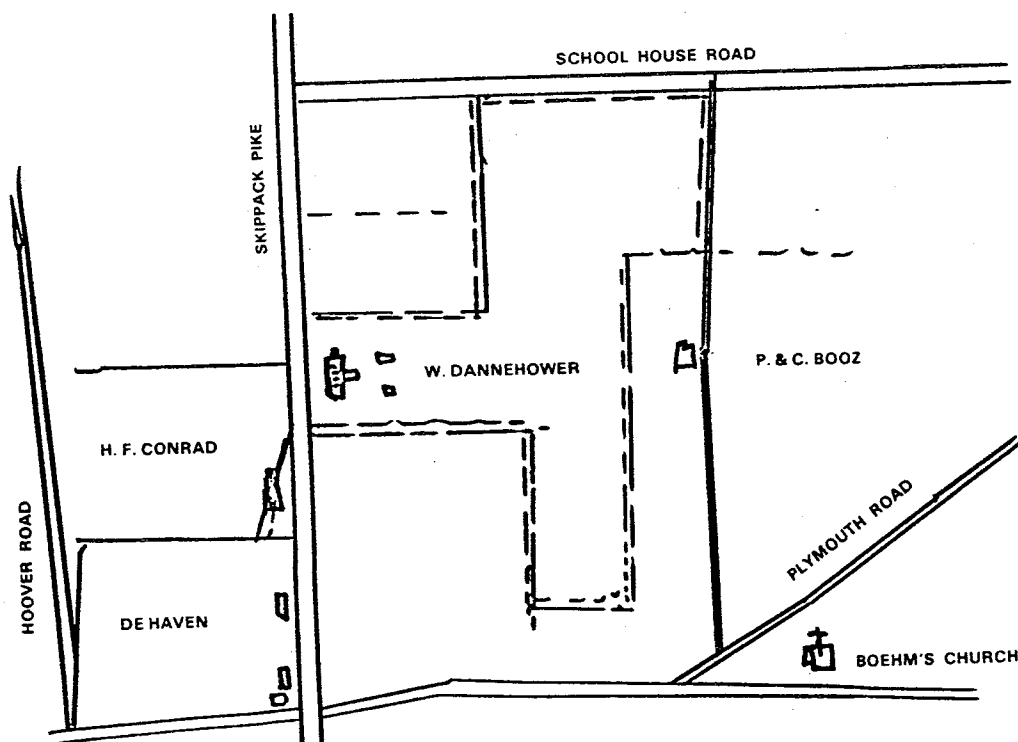
1. The will of John Whitpain, in which he sold a "message of tenement" and a tract of land to Edward in Hoffe near lands of Peter in Hoffe and John Phillip Boehm

2. Seven deeds on the DeHaven property in Whitpain plus the will of John DeHaven
3. The will of William DeHaven
4. Brief Title to 55 a. of land in Whitpain, the property of David DeHaven plus an extensive description of that land
5. A page of four generations of the DeHaven family
6. A page of the Wentz Family — Descendents of Peter Wentz
7. A list of DeHaven's and Wentz's buried in Boehm's Cemetery

It was in item four above that the phrase "thence by land formerly owned by Matthias Wentz now belonging to Joseph Conrad . . . thence by land late of Morgan Morgan of William Dannehower . . ." appeared and gave the first real workable clues.

It was in the will of John DeHaven that he left land on one side of Skippack Pike to his son, David, and land on the other side to his daughter, Lydia, who married Matthias Wentz. A look at the pages containing the DeHaven and Wentz genealogy confirmed the fact that Peter Wentz's second son (of Worcester) married Lydia, daughter of John DeHaven on April 25, 1775. This was the forth generation of DeHaven's and the third generation of those Wentz's to live in this country.

A diagram of the William Dannehower property from an 1877 map nearly fits the description of the Matthias Wentz-David DeHaven property. It was finally established that this was the "plantation."



The purpose of the brief title-description was to spell out, in detail, what David DeHaven (fifth generation) was mortgaging. After three tries (1844, 1861, 1877) on borrowing money, finally in 1880 the tract of land was satisfied by William Funk in the Mortgage Book. Whether the Lucas property was included in the mortgage is hard to discern because of the involved description of the shape of the parcel. (See diagram.)

"The 'roots' of the DeHaven's are different. Sometimes their conduct was strange." So say the descendants, Mildred DeHaven Slough and her son, John D. Slough, (also a descendant of Nicholas Slough of Revolutionary fame), who can converse readily about some of the idiosyncracies of their ancestors.

The family originated in Alsace-Lorraine when that area was juggled back and forth between France and Germany. In the era around 1682, the name was in Hoffe or Indehove or other variations, depending in which country they happened to be. In France they followed the Protestant Huguenot faith and tradition, and were often ostracized in that Catholic country.

When Willaim Penn's offers came, subsequently many bothers — with their own fleet of ships, their wives, children, and kin, plus all their possessions — sailed up the Delaware into the port of Philadelphia. When they tried to navigate the Schuylkill, they had to leave the larger ships and use smaller boats. It is here they scattered in many directions, especially in Chester and Montgomery Counties.

It was Whitpain's good fortune to attract Peter and his wife, Sidonia Levering, with nine boys and three girls. (3rd generation in this country.) Is it so amazing that so many DeHaven names are in Whitpain's history? To name a few there were William, John, Peter, Samuel, Gerhart, Jacob, a second John (second marriage) and Abraham. (Great-grandfather of Mrs. Slough.)

In the Revolution in 1777, Samuel, Jesse, Moses, David, and Jonathan DeHaven were available in Whitpain during the time the Army was encamped here.

The Slough's maintain that because of the separatist idea in following the Huguenot sect, the DeHaven's were clannish, loners and rather non-social people. Be that as it may, they did marry into other prominent families. David married Magdalene Zimmerman. Magdalena DeHaven married Hans Supplee. Lydia DeHaven married Matthias Wentz. Rather than begin another denominational religion they all became members of Boehm's Congregation. Mildred adds, "The DeHaven men were not church-goers, but the women they married saw to it that they were faithful!"

John and Elizabeth (Potts) DeHaven married in 1743, had three children, two of whom were named in his will. David received the farm on one side of the road, as mentioned before, and Lydia was to receive more ground to add to the message that Matthias Wentz and she had bought earlier. It is this property with which we are now concerned.

The earliest date of Edward in Hoffe is 1785, when Rees Thomas and Anthony Morris sold land near Peter in Hoffe and John Phillip Boehm. The next date is 1742 and contains the "oak sapling on the lands of John Indehove, son of Peter," and "lands next to Joshua Dickinson and Peter Indehove. These are deeds with dates of 1745, 1795, 1810 and 1812.

Jones Detwiler's Scrapbook confirms the fact that John's will in 1798 sold land to his son-in-law, M. Wentz. The Wentz's owned it the remainder of their lifetime, at which time the three sons, Johnathan, Samuel, and Levi inherited it. In 1833 on Johnathan's death, the farm was directed to be sold.

There seems to be a ten-year gap in activity here. One source mentions that Joseph Conrad purchased something in 1836, but not exactly where. The only other knowledge available about Matthias Wentz comes from the window-pane tax. In 1798, he had a stone barn, 37 ft. × 25 ft. a smith shop 20 ft. × 12 ft., and a house which has two stories, 4 windows with 12 lights each and 4 windows with 18 lights each, and his occupation was listed as both blacksmith and farmer. His nearest neighbor was Morgan Morgan.

Because of the lack of a name for the next owner, the approach was to peruse the tax lists after 1840. Here is where is found that W. Dannehower paid taxes, not on land, only on being a farmer and his animals. Still the maps point to the fact that this tract of land was that belonging to William Dannehower.

The index in the Recorder of Deeds office was no help. All transactions were by the eminent county squire William F. Dannehower from the Telford area. It was only by looking at the adjoining properties and figuring contemporaries that Phillip and Conrad Booz come into the picture. When reading the long obscure hand-written deeds which contain almost everything imaginable, one can schriek with joy when she finds that Adelliza Booz, daughter of Phillip, married William Dannehower!(St. John's records confirms it — in 1843.) The farm was not theirs alone. The names of Phillip Booz and wife, Conrad Booz and wife, and all three girls and their husbands were owners. i.e. Adelliza and Willaim Dannehower, Phoebe and James Wood, and Mary Loretta and Emanuel Hanes

The deed provided more information. It seems that William Dannehower was an indentured servant with Phillip and Conrad Booz as his sponsors. If one reads between the lines, one finds that it suggests that this family was not about to trust William and Adelliza with all that land and beautiful house. But they lived and worked here from approximately 1843 (when William was free of his indenture) to 1897. (See map.)

It is an interesting sidelight that Mary Loretta and Edward Hanes owned their own place on School Road (where Gale and Edith Fields now live), and Phoebe and James Wood are on record as owning several different places in the township at different times.

After reading about this, the writer literally stumbled across the gravestones of William and Adelliza in St. John's Cemetery. The reaction was, "Eureka — these were real people!"

As far as is known here, there could have been one son. There is a William C. Dannehower who was baptized and confirmed at the same date in 1870 in the records at St. John's. It is possible, from other sources of information, that he married and moved from the vicinity.

For a time the property is listed as William Dannehower Estate. (See Creamery book picture.) The dates of the Dannehower deaths are not readable on the tombstones.

Up to 1900, the ownership roughly goes like this:

1728-1798	DeHaven's . . . 2 or 3 generations
1798-1833	Matthias Wentz and family
1833-1843	10-year gap
1843-1898	William and Adelliza Dannehower, et ux, et al.

What happened then is vague and indistinct. In other words . . . nothing. So a reverse approach was attempted.

Starting from the present occupants, the list goes thus:

1968 —	Wilder and Hazel Lucas
1954 —	Morris Potter
1934 —	Helen Naylor
?	— J. Magill to Elizabeth Wertner, Agent
1920 to 1927 —	Eugene Wentz
1911 to 1917 —	Edward Phipps
1898 to 1911 . . .	13 years . . . Perhaps the place stood idle!

The earliest deed, 1706, from Richard Morris to William Palmer and Edward in Hoffe, does not mention buildings. But the indenture of 1725 naming Edward and Peter Indehave mentions a "messuage or tenement" and tract of land next to John Phillip Boehm. One can only guess that the present dining room was first because of its window construction. The first floor windows tell us that repairs have changed the originals.

The first addition came possibly between 1740 and 1760. This is when the next generation of Peter DeHaven's may have added something in the rear and maybe the front rooms, in order to accommodate the large family. Jacob Kurr, the builder in the neighborhood, could have helped construct the additions. Both Jacob Kurr and Phillip Sheneberger served as witnesses on deeds, wills, and releases.

It is well to bear in mind here that the 1742 deed used the "white oak sapling" as a marker on the deed description.



Former Dannehower Home



"Tall Oaks Today"

A picture shows what the house looked like with its three floors and front and side porches. No date can be established, but at least it is obvious it was during horse and buggy days.

The extensive renovations were made by Miss Helen Naylor around 1932-1934. The kitchen to the rear may have come first, but the beautiful west wing, with sunken living room and back terrace plus added bedroom space, make this an ideal modern example of excellent colonial architecture.

Besides being farmers and business men, the Dehaven's each had separate trades. There were smith shops among the buildings and John Dehaven is listed as a cordwainer (sewer of leather goods). It is almost certain that the entire clan was at some time involved in the shipping business, while the ladies stayed home "to mind the store." Lydia and Matthias Wentz had three or four sons, no daughters.

In the Booz-Dannehower era, three Booz daughters were involved. In the Phipps time, three daughters grew up and were married here. (See Walker account Montgomery County College.) By quaint coincidence the Lucas' have three daughters.

In the 1920's, the writer remembers that Eugene Wentz resided here and vaguely remembers him as being the Tax Collector. The memory is reinforced by the fact that Geney Wentz drove one of the first two school buses. He kept his rickety, springy old Ford bus at this place at night and bounced over bad roads by day! The kids felt lucky when they were assigned to ride in the other bus — the Reo.

Edward Phipps was the Secretary of the School Board, ran a Harleysville Insurance business, and was Justice-of-the-Peace for many years. Both Phoebe and Ed were active in Grange and County affairs. They were some of the last in the township to continue to go to Friend's Meeting. While Maurice Potter lived here, he operated a well drilling business from the adjacent property. For a time during Miss Naylor's ownership, Dr. Harry Steinbach had a Veterinary office on the premises.

The handsome house located just the right distance west of Blue Bell on Skippack Pike makes it a most desirable site for most any purpose. To be sure, it has had a varied history, even if we are not positive of its successive history.

Yes, it is good that the Lucas' called their home "Tall-Oaks." For whether or not the "tall oak" which stands today near the driveway is the "oak sapling" in the early deed, it still was the first hint that suggested the unravelling of the "mystery history" of the stately, charming "house of the three daughters" called "Tall Oaks".



